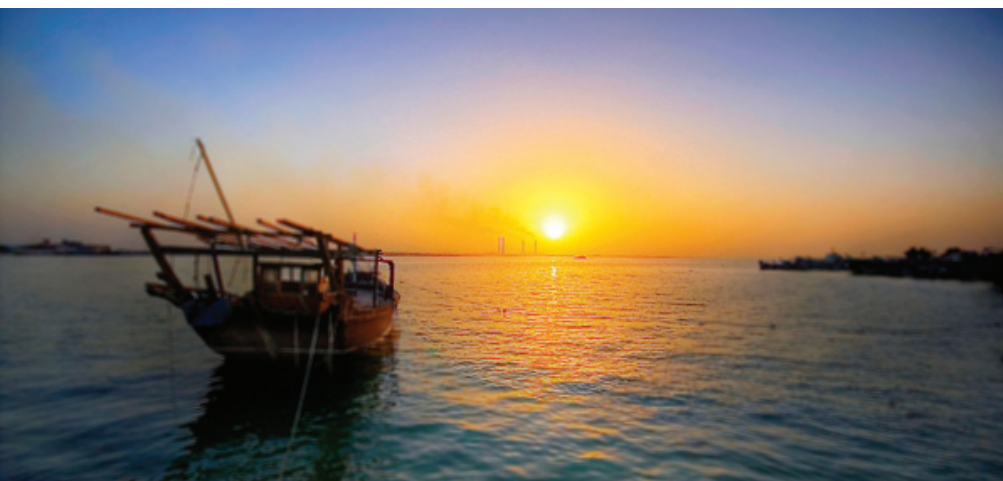


Qatar traditions in
Ramadan



Qatar traditions in **Ramadan**

The essence of Ramadan is the same the world over, but the flavor of Ramadan differs from country to country due to varying customs.



Here in Qatar there are many Ramadan traditions that have been handed down through the generations. We find these traditions very much alive, with the month of Ramadan a daily celebration in one manner or another.

“Daq Al Harees”

This is an occasion celebrated while preparing for the month of Ramadan. *“Daq Al-Harees”* comes from a special day for grinding wheat. In large households the family buys a large amount of wheat and invites a group of women skilled in grinding wheat to come and do the grinding. This is usually accompanied by singing of

traditional songs. The wheat would then be used throughout the month of Ramadan for preparing traditional meals.

Visiting Family and Friends

Ramadan is a time for strengthening ties with one's family and community, a cornerstone of Islam.

On the first few days of the month families in Qatar visit relatives, neighbours and friends to congratulate them on the coming of this special month.

Visits usually take place after Isha' and *Taraweeh* prayers, and now, you will find people staying for simple meals late into the evening.

Sharing the Iftar

Another Qatari tradition is the sending of food for *Iftar* to your neighbours. In the past you would see the streets fill up with children rushing around carrying dishes from house to house trying to reach their neighbors and family before sunset so that their mothers won't be cross with them. Sometimes children would leave dishes at their neighbors, only to be given another to take back home. This Qatari tradition has its roots deep in the Islamic teachings.



The Ramadan Canon

In the past the firing of a canon used to signal the end of the fast at sunset. This was done so that even those away from the town

would be able to know that it was time to break the fast. This tradition is still carried on ceremoniously and broadcast live on Qatar TV. You can generally still see this live every day in Qatar, in Doha, close to the corniche at the General Post Office.

The Ramadan Sufra

Iftar time is a special time when all the extended family meet to break the fast. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, grandchildren all gather at the grandfather's house for a communal meal. If the grandfather is deceased then it is usually the eldest son who takes his place. It is the custom for every household to bring a dish. In large Qatari homes the *majlis* is usually where the men have their *Iftar* and the doors are always open for any guest to drop in and share the meal without any prior notice.







The Ramadan *Sufra* (table) varies from home to home but it is never without the following essentials:

Tameer (dates) and **Laban** (buttermilk) to break the fast.

Al Thareed: a meal that consists of layers of extremely thin flat bread called *Rugag* that has been saturated with a meat and vegetable broth, on which some ground cinnamon has been sprinkled, and seasoned with dried black lemons.

Al Harees: a dish which consists of small pieces of meat, wheat, and water.

Al Lugaimat: a Qatari donut that is made from flour, sugar and yeast. It is fried then dipped in sweet syrup.

Al Ghabga

Another Qatari tradition is the '*Ghabga*'. This is a meal that takes place after midnight and to which guests are invited to share *Suhoor*, the last meal a person takes before sunrise and the beginning of the fast. These meals are usually held in the first twenty days of Ramadan. For in the last ten days of Ramadan Muslims usually dedicate the later parts of the night for prayer, reading the Qur'an and getting closer to Allah.

Al Musaharati

In the past a man called *Al Musahar* used to wake up people for *Suhoor* and *Fajr* prayer.

The *Musahar* used to stroll around the streets wearing traditional clothes, beating a drum and singing traditional songs to wake up people. Children loved to follow the *Musahar* around, repeating and singing along with him: "People wake up and remember Allah who never sleeps; wake up and remember the Prophet; eat your *Suhoor* and make your way to prayer."

The night before Eid

On the night preceding Eid people give *Zakat al-fitr*. That is a compulsory charity given to the poor to spend during the Eid. This consolidates the sense of community and brotherhood emphasized by Islam, it means that all the community rich and poor can enjoy this festive time. The *Zakat* takes the form of food or money.

Eid al Fitr

At the end of Ramadan is an Islamic celebration called *Eid al Fitr*. This is a three day period of rejoicing and rewarding one's self and family for the discipline and hard work practiced throughout the month of Ramadan.

On the day of *Eid*, after *Fajr* prayer, when dawn breaks, the whole family wakes up, the children before the adults and everybody gets dressed up in their new clothes and goes to attend the *Eid* prayer at the mosque. *Eid* prayers take place only in assigned mosques in each city and town. This is so that the whole community gets to gather as one and does not disperse between all the other mosques.



After returning from the mosque, it is time for the men folk to visit the house of their relatives, usually the elderly, to pay their respects on this day. Here they will be received in the majlis, where greetings will be exchanged and where they will be offered the "*Eid Gedou*"; sweets and refreshment.

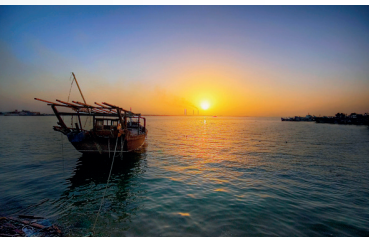
Throughout the morning you will see groups of children going from house to house calling on neighbours and relatives to give them the Eid greetings. On saying "*Eidkum Mubarak ya abl al bait*" the children will be given small sums of money as *Eid* gifts. By noon time these kids will be sitting on corners of the street counting their money and comparing it with how much their friends got, then they will be filling the supermarkets and shops buying themselves treats.

In the afternoon and evening it is the ladies turn to go visiting relatives and neighbours. On the first day they usually begin with their parents, grandparents, and elderly relatives and neighbours. You will find that the home of an elderly lady or gentlemen is never empty of guests on the first three days of *Eid*.

Eid announces the end of Ramadan, the special month for all Muslims, the month of patience and self control. Muslims say goodbye to this month wishing it didn't end, hoping the year will pass by to welcome the month again with all its beautiful meanings.

Notes :

Qatar traditions in Ramadan



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